

Mobile Phone and Electronic Games Policy

Introductory Statement:

This policy was drawn up in response to technological advances, which have seen a significant increase in hand held electronic ‘gadgets’ amongst the school population over recent years.

Rationale:

- iPods, mobile phones, Game Boys, PSP’s, MP3’s etc. are intrusive and distracting in a school environment
- Strategies must be put in place to reduce the intrusiveness of unauthorised technology in a school situation
- Some electronic devices may be harmful due to frequent use
- Mobile phones may be used to conduct bullying campaigns
- The capacity of many devices to take photographs, make video or sound recordings could lead to child protection and data protection issues with regard to inappropriate capture, use or distribution of images

Relationship to School Ethos:

The use of mobile phones and other electronic games contravenes the provision of a safe and secure school environment and is not conducive to learning - a provision which is central to the mission statement and ethos of Bweeng N.S.

Aims:

- To ensure a “technology free” school environment
- To lessen intrusions on and distractions to children’s learning
- To ensure children have maximum opportunities to socialise positively during break times.
- To ensure that electronic devices in and owned by the school (iPads, computers etc.) are used under the instruction and supervision of staff only, and are used for educational and learning purposes.

Internal School Procedures:

The following are the guidelines for mobile phone/electronic games usage in the school;

- Children are not allowed to use mobile phones/electronic games during school hours
- Pupils are not allowed to bring mobile phones or electronic games into school.
- Children are not permitted to bring mobile phones with them on school trips and tours. Teachers will have a contact number in the event that it is necessary to make contact with a parent/guardian.
- Any pupil who brings a mobile phone or electronic game to school will have it confiscated and not returned until the school day is over
- Staff have access to the school landline if urgent calls need to be made to parents
- Classroom supervision is usually organised if a class teacher has to contact other professionals or outside agencies in relation to a particular child
- Staff personal calls are normally confined to break times.
- Staff are permitted mobile phone usage only in cases of emergency.
- In exceptional circumstances, a one off occasion, a parent may request that a child bring a phone to school. The phone is to be turned off and given to the class teacher as soon as the child enters the school grounds.

Sanctions

- Any child found to intentionally have a phone in school without parental letter or without having handed it to the Class Teacher in the morning will have the phone confiscated. The phone will not be returned until a parent/guardian collects it. Similarly, the use of all personal electronic devices is not permitted during the school day – this includes arrival, class time, breaks and dismissal.
- Where a pupil is found by a member of staff to be using a mobile phone or other personal device for any purpose, it will be confiscated from the pupil and returned only to the parent/guardian.
- The School will not be liable for replacing mobile phones or other devices that are lost, stolen or damaged.
- The School incorporates this policy into the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and Acceptable Use Policy, and will treat breaches in the same manner as any other breach of these Policies.

- If a pupil uses a mobile phone or personal device to take photographs, video footage or recording of other pupils or staff members, or shares inappropriate messages via Bluetooth or other methods, this will be regarded as serious unacceptable behaviour or very serious unacceptable behaviour and disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the School's Discipline Policy.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone/personal device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, if action as sanctioned by the School in this regard is deemed ineffective, as with all such incidents, the School may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staffs share in the co-ordination and implementation of this policy. This policy is available to all parents to view in the office.

Evaluation:

This policy is monitored on an ongoing basis and amendments added as new technology comes on stream.